

v. 1. “Son of the uncle of Stoutness,” a periphrasis for “a stout and valiant man”; the words father, son, and brother are frequently joined to qualities to denote the possessor of them: thus Ṭarafah (Mo'all. 86) calls his sword *akhû thiqatin* “brother of faithfulness.”

v. 2. “I will gladden his heart,” literally “I will shake his side,” *i. e.* with mirth and joy. “*Arâk*-feeders”—she-camels fed on the *arâk*, a shrub (*Salvadora Persica*) widely distributed in the sandy soils of the East; in Western India it is known as *Pillû*.

v. 4. “He rides bare-backed the steed of perilous deeds” is explained as meaning that he encounters dangers with nought to protect him from them.

v. 8. “There flash abroad:” the word *tehellala* is used specially of the lightning. “Dooms,” *el-menâyâ*, plural of *meniyyeh*, the Fates of men; it is probable that the pagan Arabs conceived of these as women, like the Fates and Norns of Roman and Norse mythology. ‘Amr son of Kulthûm says (Mo'all. 8).

و انا سوف تدركنا المنايا
مقدرة لنا و مقدرينا

And as for us—the Fates will surely reach us:
doomed are they to us and we to them.

v. 9. “The Mother of all the clustered stars” is variously explained; some say that it means the Sun (feminine in Arabic as in German), as the greatest of all the heavenly bodies: others that it is the Milky Way; to me it seems most probable that it means the Heaven, and that the solitude which is spoken of in the first half-verse is further described in the second by saying that the wanderer's only companion on his way is the turning Heaven.

II.

‘Amr son of Ma'dî-kerib.

ليس الجمال بميزر	فاعلم و ان رديت بردا
ان الجمال معادن	ومناقب اورثن معجنا
اعددت للحدان مسا	بغة و عداا علدا
نهذا و ذا شطب يقده	البيض و الابدان قدا
وعلمت اني يوم ذاك	منازل كعبا و نهذا
قوم اذا لبسوا الحديد	د تدمروا حلقا و قدا
كل امرئ يجري الى	يوم الهياج بها استعدادا
لها رأيت نساءنا	يفحصن بالمعزاء شدا
و بدت لميس كأنها	بدر السماء اذا تددا
و بدت محاسنها التي	تحفي و كان الامر جدا
نازلت كبشهم و لم	ار من نزال الكبش بدا
هم يندرون دمي واذ	ذران لقيت بأن اشدا
كم من اخ لي صال	بواذ بيدي لدا

ما إن جزعت وما هلع—ت ولا يرد بكاي زد—دا
 البست—ا اذ—وابه و خلقت يوم خلقت جلدًا
 أغنى غناء الذاهبيد—ن أعد للأعداء عدا
 ذهب الذين أحببهم و بقيت مثل السيف فردا

Comeliness stands not in brave attire,
 though thou wrap thyself in a robe of *burd* :
 Comeliness lies in a noble stock
 and valiant deeds that bring renown.

I gathered to meet the chances of Time
 a hauberk flowing, a swift strong steed
 Stout and hardy, a groovèd blade that cleaves
 helmets and bodies of men in twain :
 5 And well I knew that on that day
 I should have to fight both Ka'b and Nahd—
 Men who, when they are arrayed in steel,
 glitter like leopards in leather and mail.
 Each man runs to the battle-stead
 with what he has gathered ready therefor.

When I beheld our women flee
 furrowing the hard earth as they ran,
 And Lemîseh's unveiled face shone as though
 it were heaven's full moon when it rises on high,
 10 And all her loveliness, hidden before,
 stood bare to see, and the case grew grave,
 I stood forth to fight their chief : and needs
 must I fight him—no escape therefrom.
 They vowed that my blood should spill : and I
 vowed, if I met then, to do my best.

How many a brother lief and dear
 have my two hands laid to rest in the grave !
 I wailed not, nor raised lament or cry,
 for my weeping would profit naught at all :
 15 I wrapped him round in his winding-sheet—
 hard was I born on my birth day !
 I stand in the stead of those dead men :
 the foemen count me a host alone.
 Gone are the men I loved, and I
 lonely abide like sword in sheath.

NOTES.

This poem is in the *Kāmil* (dimeter hypercatalectic) and is scanned thus :

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v. 1. “*burd*” a striped woollen stuff of el-Yemen, counted of great price.

v. 2. “a noble stock” : *ma‘ādīn*, plural of *ma‘dīn*, literally “mines” : hence, the origin of a family or race.

v. 3. “a hauberk flowing” : *sābighah*, *dir* being understood : a coat of mail that reaches to the ankles.

v. 4. “a grooved blade” : *Ḍū shuṭub*. *Shuṭub* or *shuṭab* are the grooves on a sword made for the blood to flow off after a stroke. “Bodies of men” *abdān* : this may mean also “short coats of mail” ; but here it seems best to take it in the more usual sense. The sword of ‘Amr son of Ma‘dī-kerib, called *eṣ-Ṣamsām* or *eṣ-Ṣamsāmeḥ* (“the short and stout, compact and heavy”), which he inherited from the Ḥimyerite Kings, was one of the most famous blades of Arab legend.

After this verse comes another in some editions

و مَدَّقًا قَرَصًا إِذَا يَهْمَدُ الْأَقْرَانُ سَدَا

And a straight spear-shaft that quivers when
I poise it, aiming it straight and true.

v. 8. “Furrowing the hard earth as they ran” *yefḥaṣna bil-ma‘zā‘i sheddā*. The verb *fahaṣa* is explained as meaning “making holes in the earth like *afāḥīs*,” plural of *ufḥūs* which is the nest of the Qatā. But this sense seems inappropriate, as the swifter the flight the less impression would the runner’s feet make on the ground ; another reading is *yemḥuṣna*, from *maḥaṣa*, which means to run swiftly : also to glance, gleam, of lightning.

v. 11. “Their chief” : *kebsh*, literally, “ram.” This word is frequently used to denote the leader of a troop, as the ram leads the flock : *e. g.* in the Mo‘all. of El-Ḥārith son of Ḥillizeh, v. 50.

حول قيس مستلهمين بكبش قرطي كانه عباء

Round Qeys, his men clad in mail with a chief
of el-Yemen, as though he were a hard white rock.

(*Qaraḍiy* means ‘of el-Yemen’, because that is the land of the *Qaraḍ* or leaves of the *selem* [*Mimosa flava*, Forsk.] wherewith hides are tanned.)

v. 14. “Profit nought at all” : *lā yeruddu zendā* ; *zend* means a fire-stick, and the literal meaning of this proverbial expression is “will not bring as return so much as a fire-stick.”

v. 16. This ‘Amr was counted, in the battles of el-Islām, as equal to a thousand men. “The Khalîfeh ‘Omar” (we read in the *Aghânî*, XIV. p. 28) “sent to Sa‘d son of Abû Waqqâṣ, his general in el-‘Irâq, ‘Amr son of Ma‘dī-kerib and Ṭuleyḥah son of Khuweylid el-Asadî, and wrote to him ‘Lo ! I have sent to aid thee two thousand men.’”

v. 17. “Lonely abide as sword in sheath” : *baqîtu mithla-s-seyfi ferdâ*. The loneliness is explained in two ways : first, because the sword has no companion in its sheath ; and second, taking *es-Seyf*, “the sword,” as meaning the incomparable blade *eṣ-Ṣamsām* which had no fellow or like.

III.

Ta'abbata Sherrâ went forth to woo a woman of 'Abs, of the house of Qârib, who first inclined to him and promised to marry him; but when he again visited her, he found her averse from him. "What hath changed thee?" said he: she answered—"Verily the honour of being thy wife is great; but my people said to me: 'What wilt thou do with a man who will surely be slain to-day or to-morrow, and thou be left husbandless?'" And he turned away from her, and said—

قالوا لها لا تنكحيه فأذ—	لاول نصل ان يلاقي مجبعا
فلم تر من رأى فتيدال و حازرت	ذيمها من لابس الليل اروعا
قليل غوار الذوم اكبر همه	دم الثأر او يلقي كميا مسفعا
يماصعه كل يشجع قومه—	وما ضربه هام العدى ليشجعا
قليل ادخار الزاد الا تعلقة	فقد نشز الشرسوف و انتصق المععا
يبديت بهغذي الوحش حتى الفذه	و يصبح لا يحمي لها الدهر مرتعا
علي غرة او نهزة من مكانس	اطال نزال القوم حتى تسعسعا
و من يغرب بالاعداء لا بد انه	سيلقي بهم من مصرع الموت مصرعا
رأين فتى لا صيد وحش يهه	فلو صافحت انسا لصافحته مععا
و لكن ارباب المخاض يشفهم	اذا اقتفروه واحدا او مشيعا
واني وان عمرت اعام انذي	سألقي سذان الموت يبرق اصلعا

They said to her—'Wed him not! for his life is nought at all:
the first spear-point that he lights on perchance shall stretch him
[dead.]'

And she gave no whit of heed to wisdom, but feared to be
the widow of one whom Night enwraps, full of hardihead;
Little he slumbers or sleeps, and the heart of his intent
is to gain the blood of vengeance, or face a foeman grim.

There comes down to fight with him whom his tribe count their bravest
[man,

but not to gain fame of valour does he smite heads in twain.

5 Little he stores of food beyond what shall stay his need:

his ribs stand forth with hunger, and his bowels cleave to his back.
He has lain in the wild beasts' lairs until they know him well,
and never through fear of him have they fled from their grazing
[grounds—

He seeks not to take the hare or the deer by guile or spring:
long has he fought with men, grey is he and old therein.

And he who deals ever with warfare, it cannot but be that he
shall meet one day therein a fall from the hand of Death.

They see a man whose heart cares not to hunt the deer,
and if they could grasp man's hand, they would verily grasp his hand.

10 But he—the lords of fat camels grow lean through fear of him,
 as they follow his track alone or girt with a company.
 And as for me, well I know that, though I live long, at last
 I shall meet the spear of Death flashing bare before mine eyes.

NOTES.

The metre of this poem is the same as that of the first piece.

v. 3. “Little he slumbers or sleeps”: *qalīlu ghirāri-n-naumi*. *Ghirār* is the beginning of sleep, drowsiness; the force of *qalīl* being to deny altogether, the phrase means that he sleeps not at all, nor does he ever suffer drowsiness to creep over him. “A foeman grim”: *kemiyyan musaffa‘ā*; *kemiy* is one fully armed: *musaffa‘* means stained or blackened with the rust of armour which is constantly worn. So er-Rabī‘ son of Ziyād says—

و مساعرا صداء الحديد عليهم و كأنما طلي الوجوه بقار

And stirrers of the flame of battle—upon them the rust of steel,
 even as though their faces had been besmeared with pitch.

v. 4. “There comes down to fight with him”: the person spoken of may be either Ta‘abbata Sherrā himself (which seems best) or the warrior mentioned in the last words of the verse before.

v. 9. “They see” *i. e.* the wild beasts: verse 8 is a parenthesis, arising out of the second hemistich of verse 7. To grasp the hand is a sign of friendship and good will in Arabia as in Europe.

v. 10. “Fat camels”: *makhād*, properly “pregnant camels,” which were held to be the most delicate of flesh (see Tarafeh, Mo‘all. 93).

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*Notes on, and Translation of, three Copper-plate Inscriptions from Sambalpur.—By PRATÁPACHANDRA GHOSHA, B. A.*

In the Proceedings of the Asiatic Society for November 1872, under the head of presentations received, the receipt was announced of a Copper-plate Grant consisting of three leaves, found in the Sambalpur District. The plates were presented to the Society by Capt. M. M. Bowie, then Deputy Commissioner of that district. The plates were found buried in an earthen vessel, at some depth below the surface in the Tributary State of Patná attached to the Sambalpur District. The inscription records the grant of a village named *Vakavedda* on a small rent to four Bráhmans of four different *gotras*. The grant was made on the 8th lunar day of the bright half of the month of *Ashadhā* in the 6th year of the reign of *Jana-mejaya*.

The plates are in tolerable preservation. The inscription runs over three oblong tablets connected together by a solid copper ring. The first covering plate is inscribed on one side only, and the last has but two lines of inscription on the second side. The ring is surmounted by a round